

## **Introduction**

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IAMSLIC President 2020/2021

46<sup>th</sup> IAMSLIC Annual Conference Convener

The 46<sup>th</sup> IAMSLIC Annual Conference was held virtually for the first time ever due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. The conference was originally scheduled to be hosted in person by Hannah Russel in Wellington, New Zealand, but in May of 2020 the IAMSLIC Executive Board and Conference Planning Committee made the decision to pivot to a virtual conference for the health and safety of all of our members. A total of 122 virtual attendees joined us for this new adventure in virtual conferencing. This included 30 presenters/speakers, 90 IAMSLIC members (including 16 sponsored new memberships from low-middle income countries), 1 guest, and 1 sponsor.

The theme of the conference was “Changing Tack: Adjusting our Sails to Navigate Uncertain Waters.” Changing Tack refers to changing direction, position, or course of action in order to adapt to the conditions of the environment you are presented with. It is all about adjusting what you have to continue forward in the right direction during turbulent times. This past year has presented us all with new and unparalleled challenges and obstacles to overcome, and in order to keep sailing on, we have had to adjust and adapt in new and innovative ways.

The conference included four program tracks:

- Jibe: Changing Direction
- Keel: Providing Stability
- Passage Plan: Navigating Rough Waters
- Innovation: Charting a New Course

The conference included a vast array of knowledgeable speaker presentations within those four program tracks, diverse group panels, engaging virtual field trips, informative vendor sponsor presentations, updates and information from the IAMSLIC organization, regional group meet-ups, networking and social time, games, and our annual business meeting.

The conference was also a venue for support and discussion on how we are adopting, negotiating, embracing, and developing strategies to provide the best information services within the storm we currently find ourselves in, while also expanding information to a global and diverse consumer base. We hope that participants left this conference with tools, skills, and information on how to not just stay afloat, but to also thrive in this unpredictable environment.

The past year presented us all with unprecedented challenges and uncertainties. The fact that IAMSLIC as an organization was able to adjust our sails and keep moving forward towards holding a 2020 conference is nothing short of an amazing feat, one which could never have been accomplished without the hard work and dedication of so many. Our first ever virtual IAMSLIC conference was a resounding success due to the creativity and dedication of the Conference Planning Committee, our committed sponsors and partners, our IAMSLIC members who donated towards sponsored memberships via our virtual Guin Fund, and our speakers who

were so willing to embrace this new journey and take the time to share their knowledge. The success of this conference is evident in the post conference survey responses in which 48 respondents of our 122 attendees expressed their satisfaction with this conference and support of virtual conferencing in general as an option moving forward. While we could not meet in person as we traditionally do for the annual IAMSLIC conference, the membership felt connected, engaged, and informed following the 2020 conference in a year where we were all so physically far apart and disconnected.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our “Admiral” level sponsor Inter-Research for funding us at such a generous level that enabled us to reach more of our membership than ever before. Their sponsorship enabled our organization to have the tools and resources vital to supporting virtual events such as this. Thank you!

And finally, I would like to express my very great appreciation of the intrepid members of the IAMSLIC organization for being so flexible and embracing the change in our conference direction in 2020. I could not have done this without their support, encouragement, and engagement in this virtual conference. Thank you to the IAMSLIC members for adjusting your sails and willingly going on this new journey with us with such short notice. You truly helped to make this conference one to remember!